



2004 *Legislative Update*

Update for the 21st District

Senator Paull Shin



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Summer 2004

Dear Friends,

I'm sitting at Waterfront Park in Edmonds thinking about the events that bind us to the rest of the world. Rising gas prices, the war in Iraq, and a presidential election year have dominated the media's attention. We still face some of the highest unemployment in the nation and a lack of good family wage jobs.

However, we had some legislative victories during our short 60-day session. The final budget included increased funding for student enrollments at public colleges and universities. The WASL exam was revised to give students more chances at academic success. And some Everett-area HOV projects will be accelerated in preparation for Boeing's 7E7 production and the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. That's great news for Snohomish County!

The summer months allow me the opportunity to start planning for next year's legislative session. This may seem a bit premature; however, it is the best time to reflect on recent accomplishments and begin preparations of next year's legislative agenda. During this time, your input is crucial in determining my legislative priorities. If you have proposals that would make positive changes to public policy that you would like me to consider for possible introduction as legislation, please don't hesitate to contact me.

It is, without a doubt, my greatest honor and privilege to represent the citizens of the 21st District. As always, I value your opinions and will do my best to address questions or concerns on issues that matter most to you.

I wish you many safe journeys and happy reunions during this summer season.

Sincerely,

Paull Shin
State Senator, 21st District

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Washington's new primary election

The political parties sued to have Washington's "blanket" primary thrown out because they claimed it violated their right to choose their own nominees to the general election in November. I believe that the blanket primary system was a good balance of the people's right to select their government and a political party's associational rights. Unfortunately, the courts disagreed and we are forced to transition to a new system. This new method should preserve voter choice, protect voter privacy and ensure the people's right to choose who they feel is the best candidate to represent them..

During the 2004 session, the Legislature passed a "top-two" primary election that would have advanced the top two vote-getters in the primary - regardless of party - to the general election ballot. The bill also created a backup "Montana" type system in which people would be required to select a party ballot in the primary election. In April, Gov. Gary Locke vetoed the "Top-Two" primary when he signed SB 6453 into law, leaving the "Montana" system in place. In this system, voters

are not required to register as a member of a political party, but are able to do so if they wish.

The "Montana" system was not my preferred alternative. Representative Democracy is the backbone of our society. It pains me that voters will have to get used to selecting a party ballot in primary elections. However, the remainder of our current system will remain intact.

As your state Senator, I will work tirelessly to make sure that Washington's election system allows the people to select the candidate they feel is best for any elected office.



Representative Democracy

King County's proposal to construct Brightwater wastewater treatment facility in Snohomish County continues to be a key issue for our community.

Although this new facility is needed to address future public health and safety concerns, the issue here is of representative democracy. Building a public facility without the consent of the host jurisdiction is simply unjust and undemocratic!

For the third consecutive year, I sponsored a bill which would have allowed local communities to complete their own siting process before building of an essential public facility begins (SB 5078). Our efforts were thwarted again, mainly by the intensive effort of King County. Although the bill died, I will continue to fight for passage in the 2005 legislative session. I am truly grateful to the many citizens who have stood up for the principle of representative democracy with me.

Paine Field

From Edmonds to Everett, Lynnwood to Mukilteo, the 21st district is blessed with a wonderful quality of life. Unfortunately, this was threatened earlier this year when expansion of Paine Field was again brought to the forefront.

More than a decade ago, a pact was made between the airport and the community through the mediated role agreement. If this agreement were to be thrown away and

commercial service introduced to Paine Field, the 21st district would be harmed. Breaking this agreement would mean increased noise pollution and drastically changing the environmental landscape. This could deter new residents and businesses from moving into our area and ruin the peaceful panorama of our district.

In February, I held a town hall meeting to discuss this possibility. More than 250 of your friends and neighbors attended. Overall, many people thought was a bad idea. I agreed.

In this instance, our efforts were successful, but we must remain vigilant. Our victory was the result of residents coming together and working across their differences to defend their community. We must continue to work together and keep the quality of life in the 21st district intact.

Transportation projects

There are a few noteworthy construction projects happening in our area. Upon completion, these road projects will ease traffic congestion, improve traffic flow and decrease the time spent in your vehicle.

I-5 -196th Street SW (SR 524) Interchange – Modifications to the I-5 southbound exit and Westside interchange that will improve traffic flow and reduce southbound I-5 backups. (\$2.9 million)

SR 525- SR 99 to SR 526 – Widens the Mukilteo Speedway from two to four lanes. This project is currently being constructed and, in addition to the widening, will include

adding sidewalks, bike lanes, better lighting and improved drainage. (\$8.4 million)

Edmonds Multimodal Terminal (Edmonds Crossing) – This project includes relocating the existing ferry terminal to a site at Point Edwards. The new facility will integrate rail, bus and ferry transit at one location. (\$10 million)

Mukilteo Multimodal Terminal – This project integrates ferry, bus, and rail transit into a single location in Mukilteo. In addition, The Port of Everett is building a rail barge facility for Boeing. (\$6.2 million)

Unauthorized use of traffic control devices

Some law enforcement and emergency personnel have electronic devices installed in their vehicles that allow them to change traffic signals to 'green' in their direction when responding to emergencies. Unfortunately, the devices can now be purchased by the general public. This session, I sponsored SB 6178, which would have increased criminal penalties for unauthorized use of these traffic devices. While the bill did not pass this session, I will continue working hard for passage of this important public safety issue.

Receiving a quality education is every child's right

Ensuring that our children have the skills to prepare them for a productive life is of utmost importance. Though we had some legislative successes in education, we need to do more.

Charter schools: A personal disappointment this session was the passage of HB 2295, allowing for the creation of up to 45 charter schools during the next six years. We spent so much energy this session on this issue, when Washington's voters have turned down charter schools twice. In addition, because these schools are outside the general public school system, I am concerned about the potential misuse of tax dollars. The money invested in charter schools could be better spent on lowering class sizes or improving school employee compensation - both things that voters have told us they want.

WASL: Beginning in 2008, students will need to pass the WASL to receive a high school diploma. I supported changes in the exam to give students more chances for academic success: Students may re-take the WASL – up to four times, if necessary – and demonstrate mastery through alternative means. Furthermore, non-English speaking students will receive more time to complete the test.

Levy Equalization: It shouldn't matter if your child is from the inner-city, or a rural or suburban area: All children deserve the same education resources. The Legislature recognized that school districts with a small

tax base should not be punished by receiving fewer education dollars than wealthier districts. The levy assistance bill included \$3.6 million, providing much needed tax relief for property-poor school districts.

Jobs

Outsourcing: There have been many news stories about the growing threat of job outsourcing. Overseas business expansion is a frightening reality for many U.S. workers, as companies opt to move out of the country in search of cheap labor and greater capital gains.

Investing human resources is one of the best ways to move the economy forward. Our economic survival depends on it. Federal and state governments are closely monitoring these trends and looking at ways to slow down the devastating outsourcing phenomenon.

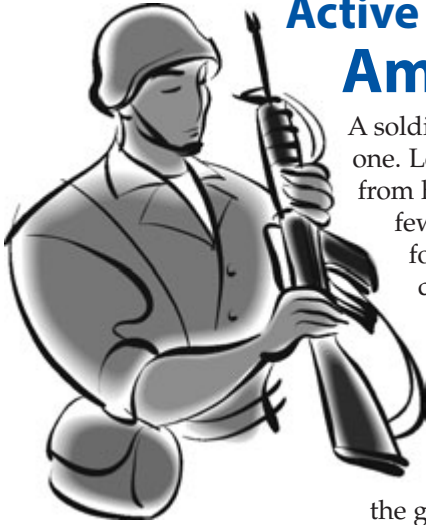
Success in higher education fuels the economic engine

Despite my strong opposition, tuition at our state's public colleges and universities has been increased by more than 30 percent in the last four years. Our state needs a higher education system that is affordable for all students and trains workers to meet the ever increasing educational demands of the global market. The 2004 supplemental operating budget included \$17 million for new enrollments, including slots in high-demand fields such as health care and technology.

College text book sales tax: As a teacher, I find it appalling that higher education costs are consistently balanced on the backs of college students. To help ease a student's debt load, I co-sponsored a bill that would have exempted college text books at higher education institutions from the state sales tax. Unfortunately, SB 6475 did not pass.

Higher education construction projects: The capital budget uses \$121 million in previously approved Gardner-Evans bonds to fund projects at two-year and four-year institutions all around the state.

Work force training bond bill: It's a fact that businesses need a well-trained work force to achieve economic success. I sponsored SB 6497, which would have created a customized work force training program for businesses looking to expand or move to the Northwest. This bill paired businesses with community and technical colleges to create training programs that meet the specific need of employers. Passage of this bill would have greatly benefited both business and workers in Washington. I plan to re-introduce and fight for this measure next session.



Active military personnel and veterans: America's freedom fighters

A soldier's life is not an easy one. Low pay, relocating far from home, uprooting every few years and readiness for war make for a difficult life. As a veteran myself, I know this first hand. However, without the sacrifices made by our military personnel, America would not be the great country that it is.

Base Realignment and Closure process (BRAC): Base closures are not only a disservice to our military, but are potentially devastating for the communities that depend on the social and economic benefits of military families. This session, I sponsored and the legislature passed a joint memorial (ESJM 8039) asking President Bush and Congress to recognize the strategic importance of our state's military bases. A list of bases that are to be closed or realigned will be submitted to the BRAC Commission in May 2005. The Legislature is committed to doing everything we can to save our military bases from realignment and closure.

Veterans' Health Care: Once our Armed Forces personnel leave the service, we need to provide them with excellent health care. This is our responsibility as a society that owes much of our freedom to fighting men and women. Despite

our good intentions, veterans have been neglected in the past. I sponsored and the Legislature passed a joint memorial (SJM 8040) that urges President Bush, Congress, and the Veterans Affairs Department to abundantly serve the current and future demands of our state's veterans and to affirm the debt owed these Freedom Fighters.

Tuition waiver for veterans: I sponsored SB 6071, allowing veterans of the Afghanistan conflict and the second Persian Gulf war to receive tuition waivers at public colleges and universities. Education fee waivers are based on military service credit. If passed, this small gesture of appreciation would have provided meaningful help to veterans who are pursuing a higher education.

Senior & Disabled Person Property Tax Relief

If you are older than 61 or are retired due to a physical disability and have disposable income less than \$35,000 per year, you may be eligible for more tax relief this year - thanks to legislation that passed this session that raises the income eligibility levels from \$30,000. For more information, contact the Snohomish County Assessor's office at 425-388-3433 or visit: www.co.snohomish.wa.us/assessor/index.asp on the Web.

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